

Chapter 3

Kindergarten – Learning and Working Now and Long Ago

- How can we learn and work together?
- What does it mean to be an American?
- How are our lives different from those who lived in the past? How are they the same?
- What is our neighborhood like?

In kindergarten, students begin the study of history–social science with concepts anchored in the experiences they bring to school from their families and communities. Students explore being a good citizen, national symbols, work now and long ago, geography, time and chronology, and life in the past. [Students can begin developing the skill of cost-benefit analysis by recognizing the choices they and others make.](#) Teachers are encouraged to build understanding of history–social science concepts while furthering beginning literacy skills as outlined in the *California Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects*. For example, shared readings of narrative and informational text related to the history–social science standards can reinforce academic content vocabulary provide opportunities for students to work on a variety of reading, writing, speaking and listening activities. Teachers should also work collaboratively with their colleagues who teach grades one through three to avoid repetition, as the

content themes they begin in kindergarten, such as understanding of and appreciation for American culture and government, geographic awareness, and ~~starting in grade one~~, economic reasoning, serve as a multi-grade strand that can allow for an extended and relatively in-depth course of study.

Learning and Working Together

In Standard K.1, students explore the meaning of good citizenship by learning about rules and working together, as well as the basic idea of government, in response to the question, **How can we learn and work together?** An informational book such as *Rules and Laws* by Ann-Maria Kishel may be used to introduce the topic while teachers use classroom problems that arise as opportunities for critical thinking and problem solving. For example, problems in sharing scarce resources or space with others or in planning ahead and ending one's activity to be on time for the next activity teach students to function as a community of learners who make choices about how they conduct themselves.

Students need help in analyzing problems, considering why the problem arose, considering ~~other~~ alternatives, developing awareness of how decisions concerning alternative behaviors might bring different results, and learning to appreciate behaviors and values that are consistent with a democratic ethic.

Students and teachers can dramatize issues and choices that create conflict on the playground, in the classroom, and at a home and brainstorm choices solutions that exemplify compromise, cooperation, and respect for rules and laws. Students must have opportunities to discuss these more desirable

behaviors, try them out, and examine how they lead to more harmonious and socially satisfying relationships with others. Literature books such as Kevin Henkes' *Lily's Purple Plastic Purse* and David Shannon's *David Goes to School*, and Laura Vacaaro Seeger's *Bully* may be used to explore these themes.

Students also need guidance in understanding the purpose of rules and laws and why a government is necessary. Teachers can discuss rules at home and at school and ask why they are important. What happens when [family members choose not to follow](#) rules ~~are not followed~~? Students can help create classroom rules for the purpose of establishing a safe environment where learning can occur. Students can also discuss possible consequences for breaking these rules.

Kindergarten Classroom Example: Being a Good Citizen (Integrated ELA and Civics)
<p>The students in Ms. Miller's class are familiar with young David's antics in David Shannon's picture book, <i>No, David!</i> They have chuckled with Ms. Miller over the story and illustrations many times. Ms. Miller and her kindergarten students explore what it means to be a good citizen and why rules are important. Ms. Miller reads aloud Shannon's sequel, <i>David Goes to School</i>, in which a young David chooses to break breaks the one classroom rule after another. With support, the children identify and discuss the main ideas of the narrative conveyed in the text and illustrations at appropriate points.</p> <p>Ms. Miller asks text-dependent questions to guide the children's</p>

comprehension and critical analysis of the story. She returns to the story with them to locate specific language in the text that address these questions:

- What are the school rules in this book?
- Who is the author? Do you think the author believes that it is important to have rules at school and in the classroom? Why?
- What does David think of the rules? Does he think they are important?
What choices does he make that help you answer this question? How do you know?
- What lessons do you think the author wants us to learn about rules that we can apply to our own school?
- Let's compare the rules in our school with the rules in David's school. Which are similar and which are different?

To further develop students' critical thinking, Ms. Miller asks students to reflect on the rules in their own classroom. She refers to the posted list of classroom rules that the children helped develop early in the school year and encourages them brief, small group conversations to consider whether any need to be changed or added. What rules in our classroom would you like to add? Why? What rules in our classroom would you like change? Why?

Knowing that some of the children need scaffolding to convey their thoughts, she provides an optional sentence frame: "We should add/change _____ as a rule because _____." (Ms. Miller considers adding or changing one of the classroom rules so that the children recognize that

their input has impact.)

CA History–Social Science Standard: K.1

CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RL.K.1-3; SL.K.1-2

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57 Students further their study of good citizenship by learning about people who
58 exhibit honesty, courage, determination, individual responsibility, and patriotism
59 in American and world history. Teachers may introduce students to important
60 historical figures who exhibit these characteristics by reading biographies such
61 as *Now and Ben: The Modern Inventions of Benjamin Franklin* by Gene Baretta,
62 *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez* by Kathleen Krull, ~~and~~ *The Story of*
63 *Ruby Bridges* by Robert Coles, [and *Malala: A Brave Girl from Pakistan and Iqbal:*](#)
64 [A Brave Boy from Pakistan by Jeanette Winter. They can use such biographies](#)
65 [to illustrate decisions that these people made.](#) -

66 Stories, fairy tales, and nursery rhymes that incorporate conflict and raise
67 value issues that are both interesting and understandable to young students are
68 effective tools for citizenship education. Students deepen their understanding of

good citizenship by identifying the behavior of characters in the stories, observe the effect of this behavior on others, examine the decisions that the characters made, why characters behaved as they did, and consider whether other choices could have changed the results. These discussions are intended to help them acquire those values of deliberation, informed decision-making, and individual responsibility that are consistent with being a good citizen in a democratic nation. A few examples of such stories are “Jack and the Beanstalk,” “Goldilocks and the Three Bears,” selections from Aesop’s Fables, *Tortillitas para Mama* (Margot Friego), Helen Lester’s *Me First*, Gary Soto’s *Too Many Tamales* and Virginia Hamilton’s *The People Could Fly*.

National and State Symbols

Kindergarten students explore the strands of national identity and cultural literacy by learning about national and state symbols in Standard K.2, using the question, **What does it mean to be American?** Students may investigate the importance of national and state symbols such as the national and state flags, the bald eagle, and the Statue of Liberty and how these symbols relate to America’s cultural and national identity. Students can begin to discover the values and principles in these symbols, by examining photographs, artwork, poems, as well as literature and informational texts. The teacher may choose to integrate this standard with Standards K.6.1 and K.6.2 and create a larger unit on national symbols, holidays, and important Americans. Literature, such as *America the Beautiful* (Katherine Lee Bates); *Fireworks, Picnics, and Flags* (Jim

Giblin); and *Purple Mountain Majesties* (Barbara Younger), can both engage and develop student understanding of these standards. In addition, songs such as “America the Beautiful,” the “Star Spangled Banner,” and Woody Guthrie’s “This Land Is Your Land,” all support student engagement and learning.

Work Now and Long Ago

In Standard K.3, students learn about the different types of jobs and work of people in their school and their local community. Students can begin to understand labor markets by recognizing that people work to earn money and that money can be used to buy things. They learn that people have a limited amount of money so they have to decide what to buy and what not to buy. Students can make a list of different jobs at the school, in the local community, and from historical accounts and the skills that people must have to work at those jobs. Some people earn money by doing jobs at home. Students can make a list of things that can be done at home to earn an allowance. They can explain that people can borrow money and give reasons why it is important to be responsible in repaying loans. This ~~standard~~ can be integrated with Standard K.4; as students construct school and neighborhood maps and talk about neighborhood structures such as the fire station, markets, houses, banks, and hospitals, the jobs and workers can be introduced as well. As students learn about daily life in the past in Standard K.6, they may investigate ways in which work and jobs have changed or remained the same over time, using the prompt, **How are our lives and our work** different from those who lived in the past? **How are they the**

same? The teacher should provide prompting and support as students analyze multiple sources, including primary source photographs, picture books, and informational books for young readers such as Vicki Yate’s *Life at Work (Then and Now)*. Students should understand that one purpose of school is to develop their skills and knowledge and that this is as important as any job in the community. Working collaboratively to do tasks, students can practice- [decision making problem-solving](#), conflict resolution, and taking personal responsibility.

Geography of the Neighborhood

Students begin the study of geography by exploring the immediate environment of the school and their neighborhood, including its topography, streets, transportation systems, structures, and human activities in Standard K.4, using the question, **What is our neighborhood like?** Teachers guide students’ investigations of their surroundings with questions about familiar features of the environment, where they can be found, and how maps can be used to locate them. Students demonstrate spatial concepts and skills by using a variety of materials such as large building blocks, wood, tools, toys, and other recycled objects to construct neighborhood structures. Activities in these centers carried on through group play become important beginnings of map work for young students. Students are encouraged to build neighborhoods and landscapes and to incorporate such structures as fire stations, airports, houses, banks, hospitals, supermarkets, harbors, and transportation lines. As appropriate and relevant, students are made aware of how steps and curbs in their neighborhood pose

physical barriers for people with mobility impairments such as people who use wheelchairs. Picture files, stories, and informational texts should be used to deepen students' understanding about the places they are creating and the work that is done in these places. Literature such as *The Listening Walk*, by Paul Showers, or *Barrio: Jose's Neighborhood*, by George Ancona, featuring photos of a Latino neighborhood in San Francisco, can be used to pique students' interest in exploring their environment.

Exploring the environment surrounding the school today and discussing how it is different from what it was when the school was built, focuses students on the fact that people in earlier times used many of the same goods and ecosystem services as we do today, such as lumber, water, and food. They discover that in earlier times people more directly consumed the goods and ecosystem services from natural systems rather than obtaining them from sources like grocery stores and lumberyards (California Environmental Principle II). Student reflection on management and use of natural resources on their campus provides them a picture of the way resource use has changed over time (See EEI curriculum unit *Some Things Change and Some Things Stay the Same* K.4.5–K.6.3).

Time and Chronology

Learning about the calendar, days of the week, and months of the year are important first steps towards understanding time and chronology in Standard K.5. Chronological thinking can be enhanced by constructing timelines of the kindergarten day, practicing sequencing of a story, and learning words such as

first, next, then, and finally while sequencing story events. While studying the national symbols, holidays, and times past, the teacher may add selected events and pictures to a large class timeline to further develop students' sense of chronology.

Reaching Out to Times Past

In Standard K.6, students take their first vicarious steps into times past to develop historical literacy and explore the theme of continuity and change. Students learn about national holidays and their purposes, as well as the events associated with them. Teachers may read historical accounts of famous Americans which further students' understanding of national identity and cultural literacy.

Students also study the past and consider how life was the same as or different from their lives. For example, students may learn that getting water from a well, growing food and raising livestock, and making clothing are examples of how the past may be different from their lives today. Stories from the *My First Little House Books* series and informational books such as Vicki Yates' *Life at Home* that illustrate the work and daily lives of characters and people in the past can help students develop historical empathy and understand life in the past. Primary sources can be introduced by using photographs of transportation, homes, work, common household items, and clothing while questions are posed about which aspects of these items have changed and remained the same and what this tells us about life in the past. Students should be encouraged to engage

184 in discussions and write texts about the similarities and differences of daily life
185 today versus daily life long ago drawing on evidence from the primary source
186 photographs, informational texts, and literature books they have been utilizing.

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